

Rhode Island

Summer / Fall 2004

Ag-Review

RI. Ag-Review is a publication of the RIDEM/Division of Agriculture, 235 Promenade St. Prov., RI 02908, 401-222-2781

Chief's Corner

By: Ken Ayars, Chief
RI Division of Agriculture

Introducing Rhode Island FarmWays

Rhode Island FarmWays is an outgrowth of a partnership between the RI Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education, the RI Division of Agriculture/DEM, the University of Rhode Island, College of Environment and Life Sciences and the Office of Cooperative Extension to develop and promote agritourism in Rhode Island. The project is funded in part by a grant from the USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Rhode Island is blessed with many farms and agricultural sites which are tourist and visitor destinations (or have the potential to be) for local fresh produce in addition to their proximity and value in relation to scenic sights and pathways, cultural and historic locations. "Agritourism" utilizes and promotes the agricultural, natural and historic etc. assets of the farm as a draw for visitors, which also benefits the direct marketing of your local farm products. Based on recent USDA figures on per farm marketing sales (e.g. farmers markets, roadside stands), Rhode Island is, in fact, ranked second nationally. This demonstrates the public's interest in purchasing local farm products directly from the farm, and how we believe it can be further enhanced for your benefit and that of agriculture in general in Rhode Island.

Agritourism and the Rhode Island FarmWays program are components of overall farm viability goals and efforts in Rhode Island. Agriculture is an important component of our quality of life, history and economy, and vital to maintaining access to our many local and

varied farm products, including fruits and vegetables, nursery, greenhouse, dairy and beef and a wide variety of value added products, as well as providing a full menu of farm experiences.

Please consider participating in the Rhode Island FarmWays program.

The Agritourists Are Coming!

Are YOU Ready?

More than ever before, tourists, school groups and visitors from near and far are looking for "on the farm" experiences.

- They're coming to learn and to have fun.
- They're coming to buy.
- And they can increase your bottom line.

Farmers across the country are discovering the economic benefits of reaching out to tourism markets. They're offering local products, educational programs, and new ways to enjoy their sites.

Agritourism is expected to increase 30% per year over the next decade. There are many options and opportunities for you to increase your business and income.

And **Rhode Island FarmWays** is the program to help you get ready!

RICAPE Can Help

Through participation in the **Rhode Island FarmWays** program we will work with you to:

- Increase agritourism on your site
- Develop and market your own products and services
- Attract more students and visitors
- Expand your educational & recreational programs and activities
- Adapt your site to meet different needs
- Enhance your tourist amenities
- Keep RI's farms visible and economically viable

Rhode Island FarmWays

Whether you are new to agritourism or already welcome folks to your site, the Rhode Island FarmWays program--run by the RI Center for Ag Promotion and Education (RICAPE)-- can help you succeed. We offer:

- Professional development and training
- Consultations
- Research and assessments
- Marketing support and outreach
- Liaison with press and media, RI's tourism councils, and professional tour operators
- Coordination and networking
- Funding identification and grants for demonstration projects and business development

Rhode Island FarmWays...Just for You!

August-December, 2004

We'll come to your site to assess your needs.

January-May, 2005

We'll be conducting a host of training programs.

April, 2005

You'll be invited to the first RI Agritourism and Direct Marketing Summit.

Interested? Respond Now.

Call or e-mail us today to be in on the first phase of this exciting new program. You'll receive a regular delivery of great ideas and information. And you'll be ready when visitors arrive!

Stu Nunnery
RICAPE, Executive Director

phone: 401-222-2781 ext 7104

email: ricape@earthlink.net



Rhode Island Center
for Agricultural Promotion
& Education

The RI Ag-Review is a publication of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Division of Agriculture and is published four times per year. All correspondence should be directed to The RI Division of Agriculture 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908
Kenneth D. Ayars, Chief
Stephen M. Volpe, Deputy Chief, Editor

Marketing Update

By: Pete Susi RI DAG

DEM FARMERS' MARKETS 2004 SEASON IN FULL SWING

The four farmers' markets, sponsored by the Department of Environmental Management are now open. Colt State Park in Bristol and Goddard Park in Warwick are open every Friday through



October. Fisherman's Memorial State Park in Narragansett is open every Sunday through October. Haines Memorial Park is open every Wednesday through October. These farmers markets are enjoying a great season. Area farmers have a great selection of produce to offer. Corn, tomatoes, apples, peaches are a short list of the items that will be available now and in the coming months. It is a great time to pick up some great corn and tomatoes for your family. This is one of the best growing seasons we have had in many years.

Also at these farmers markets, WIC Farmers Market Coupons will continue to be accepted. This year the new Senior Farmers Market Coupons are available to Rhode Island Seniors. These coupons are accepted at farmers markets and roadside stands throughout the State of Rhode Island.

This year the DEM/Division of Agriculture will continue its partnership with Brown University Food Services Program. This partnership has created many links between RI farmers and Brown University to supply fruits and vegetables for Browns Food Service Program. Also Brown University in partnership with the DEM/Division of Agriculture has created a farmers market at Brown University to benefit

students, staff and area residents. The farmers market is open every Wednesday, 10 am to 3 pm, September through the first Wednesday in November. The Brown Farmers Market is a great success and we will continue this farmers market in the future.

In addition to these farmers markets, we have added a traveling farmers market on Mondays that visits Senior Centers throughout the State of Rhode Island. By bringing the farmers to the Senior Centers we have made it very easy for Seniors to use their coupons. It has been a great success and we will be doing it through October.

The DEM/Division of Agriculture Farmers Market Program has become so successful it is estimated that it adds over a \$500,000.00 of income to the Rhode Island economy. This figure does not take into account the added sales generated at farm stands due to customer and vendor relationships that have developed at these farmers markets.

Rhody Fresh News Milk Milk Milk

From the Rhode Island Dairy
Farms Cooperative

We, your local dairy farm families, are proud of our herds and the lands that we call home. Over the years, we have resisted high development pressures, weathered low incomes and rising production costs, worked rigorous schedules, and dealt with tough weather conditions all for the sake of holding on to what is most dear to us.

Our fields, pastures and woodlands help to balance the water cycle, protect watersheds and provide clean air, wildlife habitat, rural character and scenic beauty. Our cows provide nutritious, wholesome milk that feed your families a variety of nutritious foods and favorite treats.

The price that dairy farmers receive for their milk fluctuates. It is never constant or dependable. Within the last year, milk prices plummeted to levels that last occurred when Jimmy Carter was president.

What does Rhode Island conserve with our dairy farms?

- ✓ Family legacies and heritage
- ✓ Prime farmland and open space
- ✓ Local food and fiber production
- ✓ Income and jobs
- ✓ Valuable wildlife habitat, woodlands and scenic beauty
- ✓ Reduces future burdens on municipal services
- ✓ Rural watersheds

Our Mission

To provide fresh, highest quality milk produced by local farms. This cooperative effort works towards conserving a sustainable, ecologically sound, independent future for Rhode Island family farms.

By purchasing Rhody Fresh Milk, you're not only getting fresh, local milk, you're also supporting Rhode Island Dairy farmers, and helping to preserve local farms, fields, and wide open spaces for Rhode Islanders to enjoy for generations to come.

About the Rhode Island Dairy

Farms Cooperative

Board of Directors

Louis Escobar, Highland Farm
Portsmouth, RI
Barry James, Tomaquag Valley Farm
Hopkinton, RI
Joseph Dutra, Wanton Farm
Jamestown, RI
Glen Cottrell, Cottrell Homestead
South Kingstown, RI
Francis Kenyon, Meadowburg Farm
Richmond, RI

Visit us at www.rhodyfresh.com

(Rhody Fresh continued)

Project Consultant

James G. Hines Executive Director

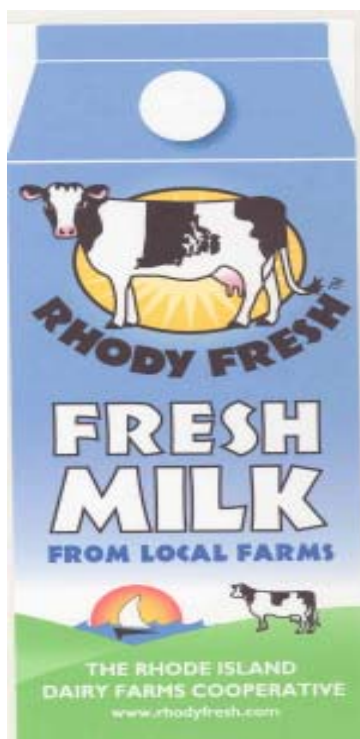
Rhody Fresh is distributed by

Little Rhody Foods
73 Cucumber Hill Rd
Foster, RI 02825

Special Thanks to:

Rhode Island DEM Division of Agriculture
Rhode Island Economic Development Corp
Rhode Island Foundation
Rhode Island Rural Development Council

...and the many other individuals and organizations who continue to support the Rhode Island Dairy Farms Cooperative and Rhody Fresh Milk!!!!



For a list of where you can purchase Rhody Fresh Milk visit our web site at www.rhodyfresh.com

USDA REPORTS

From USDA New England Ag-Stats Service

APPLES: The 2004 New England apple crop is expected to total 4.1 million bushels (42-pound units), three percent below the 2003 crop. A wet spring resulted in apple scab in some areas. Some operators reported deer problems, hail damage, light winter kill and poor pollination due to a lack of bee activity. Rhode Island's 2004 estimated production is unchanged from a year ago, while Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont output is expected to be lower than 2003. The New England fruit set was reported moderate and size of fruit ranged medium to large according to early August assessments.

AGRICULTURAL LAND VALUE:

The January 1, 2004 New England farm real estate value, including land and buildings, averaged \$4,019 per acre, up six percent from the previous year. Every State in the region showed an average value per acre increase from 2003 to 2004. Connecticut and Rhode Island farm real estate averaged \$10,200 per acre.

New England's cropland values rose six percent above a year earlier to \$6,250 per acre. Pasture land averaged \$4,070 per acre in a regional comparison which included Delaware, an increase of five percent from 2003 value.

Coming Events

By: Ron Newman, RIDAG

The eleventh annual Rhode Island State Giant Pumpkin Championship will be held on Saturday, October 9th, 2004 at Frerichs Farm in Warren, RI. Weigh off day will start at 10:00am with the unloading of the biggest pumpkins grown in the Ocean State. The weigh off will begin at 1:00pm. There will be food and refreshments served in a beautiful farm, nursery, and greenhouse setting. It will be an incredible day for fun, laughter, and the enjoyment of seeing the largest pumpkins anyone has ever seen. Frerichs Farm famous Pumpkin Coach will shuttle children and adults around for a fun filled adventure at the Farm. Corn and hay bale mazes will challenge everyone's skills. This is a free event for family and friends. Do not forget to bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on during the weigh off. A raindate has been setup for either Sunday, October 10th, or Monday, October 11th, at the same times. Do not hesitate to call 401-245-8245 to check for raindate changes.

The Rhode Island Pumpkin Growers Association (RIPGA), an association of competitive, giant pumpkin growers, is running this year's event with the help

of the Rhode Island DEM Division of Agriculture.

The purpose of this event is to determine the largest pumpkin grown in Rhode Island for 2004 and to crown a State champion. The Rhode Island record was grown in 2003 by Joe Jutras of North Scituate with a 1225.4 pound pumpkin. The New England record is 1337.6 pounds set in 2002 by Charlie Houghton of New Boston, NH. The world record was won in 2003 with a 1385 pound pumpkin grown by Steve Daletas of Pleasant Hill, OR.

To get to Frerichs Farm from Providence or Fall River, take Route 195 to the Route 136, Warren/Newport Exit (this is exit 2 in Massachusetts). Follow Route 136 South across Route 6 for two miles to Schoolhouse Road on the left. Take Schoolhouse Road for one mile to Kinnicut Avenue (right at the fork) and proceed to Frerichs Farm on the right.

Anyone interested in competing in this year's event, or receiving additional information, should contact Barbara Frerich at 245-8245 at Frerichs Farm, or Ron Newman at the DEM/RI DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE at 222-2781 (ext:4518).

The Prime Time Senior Living Expo will be held at the Warwick Mall on Wednesday October 6, 2004, from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The Division of Agriculture will display information on Rhode Island Grown - Take Some Home and information including brochures on RI Farmers Markets, Pick-Your-Own-Berries, RI Honey and Maple Syrup, RI Christmas Tree Farms, RI Roadside Stands, and RI Vineyards. Information will be distributed regarding the Rhode Island Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The Division of Agriculture will also be distributing to seniors, fresh RI Grown Apples. The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture booth will also be passing out Cabot Cheese samples. Cabot dairy products have won every major award for taste including Best Cheddar and Best Flavored Cheese from the World Championship Cheese Contest. Cabot is owned by the dairy farm families of Agri-Mark, a Northeast dairy cooperative owned by most Rhode Island Dairy Farmers and other dairy farms in the Northeast.

The Prime Time Senior Living Expo provides important and interesting information for Rhode Island Seniors.

For further information contact Ron Newman at the DEM/RI DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE at 222-2781 (ext:4518).

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Information



1. What is the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)?

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a program in which grants are awarded to States, United States territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. The grant funds may be used only to support the costs of the foods that are provided under the SFMNP; no administrative funding is available. This is the first year Rhode Island has received funding for this program. For the year 2004 RI has received a grant of \$198,500.00.

2. What is the purpose of the SFMNP?

The purposes of the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program are to:

1. Provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs from farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs to low income seniors, and

2. Increase the consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding, developing, or aiding in the development and expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

3. Who is eligible for SFMNP benefits?

In Rhode Island low-income seniors, are generally defined as individuals who are at least 60 years old and have household incomes of not more than 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines (published each year by the Department of Health and Human Services), these are the targeted recipients of SFMNP benefits.

4. When does the SFMNP operate?

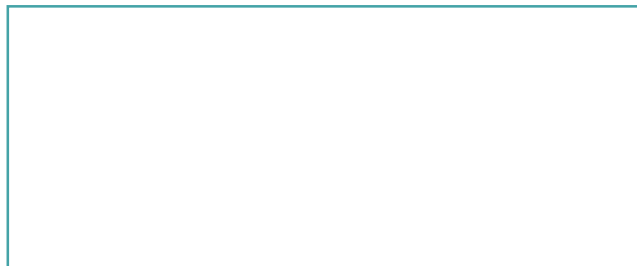
SFMNP benefits are provided to eligible recipients for use during the harvest season. In Rhode Island the program benefits begin June 1 and end on October 31st of that year.

5. How does the SFMNP operate?

Once the SFMNP benefits have been issued to eligible seniors, they can be used to purchase fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs at authorized farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. Nationwide in 2003, these products were available from over 13,000 farmers at more than 2,000 farmers' markets as well as close to 1,700 roadside stands and more than 200 community supported agriculture programs. For FY 2002-2007, Congress provided a total of \$15 million for the SFMNP.



Rhode Island Department of
Environmental Management
Division of Agriculture
235 Promenade St.
Providence, RI 02908
Vol. 3, No. 2



Visit us at www.state.ri.us/dem